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(Not yet approved by the Committee)

COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

March 26, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobby Wartgow, Chairman
Mike Williams, Vice-Chair
Richard Rand
Mike Heidemann

Kelly Dory
Rory Chetelat
Fergus Laughridge
Stephanie McCarty

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dave MacIntyre
Richard Schwall
John Fildes, MD

STATE HEALTH DIVISION STAFF PRESENT

John Lambert, EMS Representative II
Richard Fenlason, EMS Representative II
Connie McFadden, Administrative Asst. III

OTHERS PRESENT

Nancy Abrams
Debbie Aitken
Brandon Brady
Mike Brown
Jack Conely
John Gillenwater
Pat Irwin

Will Johnston
Vince Pirozzi
Mike Schwartz
Pat Songer
Michael Streeter
Michael Sullivan
Jim Zimmerman

CALL TO ORDER

Bobby Wartgow called the meeting to order at 10:10 am. He advised the committee that there was quorum present, which would allow for action to be taken on properly agendaed items as needed.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES

Chairman Wartgow stated that terms will be ending for several committee members in October, 2007. The committee has not been as active as it could and Chairman Wartgow stated that he wants to make the committee as active and productive as possible during the remainder of his term. It is necessary to start looking at replacements for members whose terms are expiring. Chairman Wartgow stated that the EMS community in Nevada needs to be more involved in the activities of the committee. As consideration is giving to new committee members, we need to find people who are proactive and will be able to commit to attending committee meetings and being a voice for the segment of the EMS community that they represent.

Fergus Laughridge explained the appointment process. The member positions on the committee are set in statute. Members are appointed by the Governor's Office to fill specific positions. Those individuals who wish to be appointed to the committee make application through the State

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EMS Office. An application would consist of a letter of interest, indicating which specific category the individual would represent, along with a resume or CV. The State EMS Office forwards all applications to the Governor's Office for consideration and appointment.

It was suggested that in an effort to get more input from the EMS community that a contact list of committee members be included in the meeting minutes so others can discuss appointments with current members. In addition, it was suggested providing video conferencing of committee meetings be explored so that more individuals can be involved without having to travel long distances.

HEALTH DIVISION REPORT

Fergus Laughridge stated that Alex Haartz, Health Division Administrator and Bradford Lee, MD, State Health Officer sent apologies that they were unable to attend due to legislative commitments. They wanted to convey their support to the providers for the work that is being done. This item will be carried over to the next meeting.

EMS PROGRAM REPORT

Fergus Laughridge stated that the EMS budget for FY08-09 has been approved by the governor's office. It is currently under consideration by the legislature. The budget includes funding for radio system repairs that may be necessary due to the aging radio system. There remains funding for EMS training grants. There is a need to encourage rural services to apply for these training grants. A member of the audience discussed the difficulties rural services were having with the process of requesting grant training funds. Mike Williams requested that the EMS Office prepare a mailing to rural services explaining the grant process.

The State EMS office has changed the certification and licensure process in an effort to shorten the turn-around time. With this change, all applications are submitted directly to the Carson City office.

The State EMS office in Carson City has relocated to 4150 Technology Way, Suite 200, Carson City, Nevada. With this relocation the EMS Office is housed in the same location as Health Division Administration and the Public Health Preparedness Program (PHPP). EMS has worked closely with PHPP for some time and now being housed with them this collaboration is moving forward.

The EMS Conference will be held in April. This conference is an excellent opportunity to get CEUs as well as meeting with EMS providers from throughout the state.

The EMS Office is in the 2nd year of an EMS-C grant. Bob Heath is the lead on this grant.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Fergus Laughridge stated there are eight (8) bills that could affect EMS. They are:

- AB200: Makes an appropriation to the Information Technology Division of the Department of Administration to add sites and enhancements to the 800 MHz radio system.
- AB206: Makes an appropriation to the Department of Administration to fund certain information technology projects.
- AB257: Requires employers of certain emergency medical technicians, firefighters and peace officers to establish a program of educational assistance.
- AB360: Establishes the State Program for Vascular Health.

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- SB58: Provides for the imposition of an administrative assessment for certain traffic violations to be used for the awarding of grants to volunteer organizations that provide emergency medical services.
- SB228: Enacts provisions related to certain medical review committees.
- SB244: Revises provisions governing the collection of data relating to the tracking of waiting times for emergency medical services at hospitals.
- SB365: Requires the continuation of the VHF Highband Radio Project.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NEVADA EMS ELECTRONIC DATA SYSTEM (NEEDS)

Fergus Laughridge reviewed the NEEDS program used by State Health Division for patient care reporting. Most rural services are using the software provided by the State Health Division and the Office of Rural Health. The vendor, Med Media, works with other collection software vendors to develop an interface so that data from those other systems can be uploaded to the NEEDS program. Med Media has been working with the National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) to ensure that Nevada is certified as being compliant with the national system. This certification provides funding opportunities for the state. Access has been granted to the Department of Transportation (NDOT) for reporting purposes. As a result of this access, Nevada has moved to the top percentile in reporting compliance.

NATIONAL REGISTRY OF EMTS (NREMT) UPDATE

Bobby Wartgow stated that Will Johnston and Nancy Abrams with Carlin Volunteer Fire had submitted a letter to the committee regarding NREMT. (A copy of that letter is attached.) Chairman Wartgow provided time so all committee members had an opportunity to review the letter. He asked Mr. Johnston and Ms. Abrams to explain the letter. Mr. Johnston stated that they were not aware of any statistics on NREMT in Nevada so he and Ms. Abrams conducted a phone survey with the results being summarized in the letter provided. The letter indicates that there is a 27% pass rate with NREMT testing. A lengthy discussion followed. Several individuals in attendance indicated that the pass rates in their departments were much higher. Some in attendance stated that while NREMT is a good program, it does not work well in Nevada because of the number of rural volunteer services. The cost of testing and travel to test centers for the written exam has a negative fiscal impact for rural services. Fergus Laughridge indicated that the pass rate for NREMT testing in the entire state is 80%. It was suggested that the State EMS Office work with NREMT to improve access to test sites and report on any progress made at the next committee meeting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NREMT

By unanimous consent, the committee recommends that the State EMS Office work with National Registry to increase access to testing throughout the state. If access issues cannot be resolved, the State EMS Office should look at alternative testing methods.

NEVADA PROJECT HEARTBEAT – DISCUSSION

Mike Williams provided an overview of Nevada Project Heartbeat. This is a program started by the State EMS Office, the Office of Rural Health and Cardiac Science to provide AEDs and training at reduced rates to communities in Nevada. The State EMS Office has since collaborated with REMSA and Humboldt General Hospital to form Nevada Project Heartbeat.

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Under this program, REMSA and Humboldt General Hospital will provide training to communities who purchase AEDs through this program.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING UNILATERAL DECISION MAKING BY EMS PROGRAM

Bobby Wartgow talked to the committee regarding a question he was asked about unilateral decision making by the State EMS Office. Chairman Wartgow asked for any comments regarding this issue. One member of the audience stated that there needs to be more communication between the State EMS Office and service providers. Fergus Laughridge stated that one way to ensure that there is clear communication is for each service to keep the State EMS Office advised of the correct contact person. Services will change coordinators or contact information, such as phone numbers and email addresses, and not advise the State EMS Office resulting in a drop in communication. Mike Williams stated that another way to improve flow of information to the EMS community would be for this committee to meet on a regular basis and for attendance to be increased by using video conferencing. Fergus Laughridge agreed to look into this possibility and will report back to the committee at the next meeting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING TRAUMA PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Mike Williams talked to the committee about the development of a State Trauma Plan. Mr. Williams and Chairman Wartgow both participated in a workgroup sponsored by the State EMS Office to develop the plan. The workgroup included John Fildes, MD, President of the American College of Surgeons, Myron Gomez, MD, President of the Nevada Trauma Surgeons, and other members of the medical and hospital community. The EMS Office contracted a facilitator with experience with development of state trauma plans. This was a fast-track project with meetings of the workgroup every few weeks. Mr. Williams did not bring a copy of the final plan with him, but Mr. Laughridge agreed to provide copies at the next meeting. Mr. Williams stated that he would like the committee to review and endorse the plan and work to bring it to the attention of state legislators so that it can be fully implemented.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING HOSPITAL DIVERSIONS

Bobby Wartgow and Mike Williams talked to the committee about the issue of overcrowding in emergency departments. EMS services and medical facilities are working to find solutions to the problem. Mike Williams stated that REMSA has started sending supervisors to take charge of patients at the emergency department until the hospital can take over care. This allows the ambulance crew to return to work. Kelly Dory stated that Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare is looking at creative places to temporarily house patients. A discussion followed about the challenges faced by EMS services concerning this issue. Senate Bill 244 addresses this issue and will be monitored closely by the State EMS Office and members of the committee.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PROTOCOL REVISIONS

Fergus Laughridge stated that it has been several years since the Standardized State Protocols have been reviewed. It is time to look at updating them. Mike Williams suggested that a sub-committee be formed that would include medical directors to begin the review process. He suggested that a membership list be developed and presented at the next committee meeting. Mr. Laughridge agreed to do so for the next meeting.

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Committee Member Richard Rand left the meeting at 1:00 pm so there was no longer a quorum present so no action could be taken on remaining agenda items which were discussed as “information items” only.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING STANDARDS FOR EMS TRAINING CENTERS

Fergus Laughridge stated that there is a need to better control the standard of instructors and instruction programs in the state. Clark County has a training program that has been accredited by the Committee for Accreditation of Health Education Professionals. That is a standard that the State EMS Office would like to see with all community college based training programs. The standard for training provided on a service level also needs to be reviewed. Currently instructors in Nevada can teach to their certification level. Maybe it would be more appropriate for instructors to teach to a lower level only, such as Intermediate EMTs instructing Basic courses and not Intermediate courses. This item will be on the agenda for the next committee meeting to determine if the committee needs to take any action.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABATEMENT PROGRAMS

As an information item, Mike Williams stated that the Sacramento Bee has been doing an investigative series on drug and alcohol abuse problems within the EMS community in California. National news outlets have taken an interest in this series. Mr. Williams stated that the possibility exists that local news outlets may also take an interest and services should be aware.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING DEVELOPMENT OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT AND GRANT PROGRAM

Mike Williams talked to the committee about the need to develop a sub-committee to review and make recommendations on grants for equipment, supplies and training. As discussed earlier, if SB58 is passed this committee will be tasked with development of a grant process. Even if that bill does not pass, there are other opportunities for grants to rural and volunteer services. Mr. Williams stated that REMSA has realized that they do not get a good trade-in value for old equipment as they upgrade. They would like to donate equipment they are replacing that is still serviceable to volunteer services, but are in need of a mechanism to make that happen in an equitable way. Other agencies have indicated that they also have equipment that they would like to donate to services in need. Having a grant process overseen by this committee would be the best way to make that happen. Mr. Williams suggested that a sub-committee be formed at the next committee meeting to address this issue.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NEVADA EMS RADIO NETWORK

As an information item, Bobby Wartgow talked about a study being conducted on the current radio system. He asked Jake Conely to provide an overview of the process. Chief Conely stated that by 2013 all public safety radios would have to be narrowband by FCC ruling. The current radio system will not comply. Funding will need to be found to replace the current system. The state needs to study different systems to ensure that we find a viable system.

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DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING TYPING OF RESOURCES

Fergus Laughridge stated that the committee needs to work on EMS resource typing that can be tied to a mutual aid plan. He suggested that a sub-committee be formed at the next meeting to begin that process. Mike Williams requested that at the next meeting the State EMS Office provide the minimum standards as stated by NIMS to assist the sub-committee.

NEXT MEETING – AGENDA

Next meeting will be May 29, 2007 at 10:00 am at the State Health Division Offices at 4150 Technology Way, Carson City.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND DISCUSSION

Stephanie McCarty and the committee thanked East Fork Fire for hosting today's meeting.

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:00 P.M.